the enemy to spare troops from that sector to rescue their comrades from the plight into which the French surprise assault would plunge them further south.

The secondary part allocated to the British Army in this plan was bitterly resented by Sir Douglas Haig. This resentment is apparent in the reply sent by Sir Douglas Haig to General Nivelle's communication :—

" Montreuil,
23rd December,
1916.

In reply to your letter from General Nivelle, General Haig made this morning the following declaration :—

Haig's reply to Nivelle

1. The request of the French Command involves the use of ten British divisions ; there would only remain eight divisions available, of which the worth of six is very mediocre.*

2. General Haig cannot under present conditions accept a situation which would remove all offensive capacity from his armies.

3. He has accordingly referred the question to the British War Committee, asking it to send

More divisions to France wanted from home and Salonika

the necessary divisions to satisfy the request of the French Command, which insistently demands the return of the divisions at Salonika.

5. The relief could be begun 15 days from now, and continued as fast and as far as new divisions arrived, if sent.

* This is a characteristic objection. When the Commander-in-Chief later on was persuading the Cabinet to assent to the Passchendaele attack he had 42 divisions available for the operations—all of the best. Now he cannot spare ten divisions for a plan he dislikes.